



Premier of Alberta

Office of the Premier, 307 Legislature Building, Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2B6 Canada

February 17, 2022

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister,

Thank you for providing an overview of the proposed federal *Emergencies Act* (*Act*) during the First Ministers' Meeting (FMM) on February 14, 2022, and your letter of February 15, 2022.

Your government declared a public order emergency on February 14, 2022. This was contrary to the wishes of Alberta and done without adequate or meaningful consultation with the provinces, as required by section 25 of the *Act*. Your government's failure to adequately consult, coupled with the serious overreach of the orders, does a great disservice to the Province of Alberta and our country.

Canadians and our economy must always be safeguarded, but invoking the *Act* is extraordinarily heavy-handed, outside our democratic norms, and disproportionate to the issues. I agree the law must be enforced, but it can be done with existing enforcement tools and without resorting to these kinds of extreme measures. The *Act* should be used only under extraordinary circumstances when normal enforcement tools are inadequate.

The *Act* is not intended to address local and contained issues. Your government did nothing to attempt to de-escalate the situation outside Parliament Hill before invoking the *Act*. There were many other constructive ways the federal government could have provided support to address the issues in Ottawa.

As I indicated on Monday, invoking the *Act* was not required to address the situation at the Coutts border crossing. Alberta successfully managed the impacts of the Coutts blockade and other protests through effective police work by the RCMP and supporting law enforcement agencies. This blockade was peacefully resolved, with those involved dispersing on their own accord. The RCMP laid numerous charges under the *Criminal Code of Canada* and the *Alberta Traffic Safety Act* within their normal scope of authority. The Government of Alberta was able to procure towing vehicles and personnel, which, while available, were not required to remove the blockade in Coutts.

Similarly, the City of Edmonton experienced three one-day weekend protests. These were managed by the Edmonton Police Service with the protests being limited to the day of the event.

While Alberta has the authority, under the Alberta *Emergency Management Act* to declare a provincial state of emergency, Alberta has not declared a state of emergency because it is an extraordinary step, which should only be taken when normal enforcement tools are insufficient. The RCMP and local law enforcement agencies have the tools needed to manage local events successfully.

While the demonstrations in Alberta, and across the country, have been disruptive at times, they do not represent a national emergency. Rather, they are the symptom of the hardships many Canadians have endured through the pandemic. Your government's vaccine mandate for cross-border truckers has no useful public health purpose. It has only served to ignite the very real frustrations of some Canadians who, based on their employment circumstances, have faced greater economic hardship during the pandemic.

The powers under the *Act* have potential to do irreparable harm to Canadians and our democratic society. To enable the arbitrary freezing of bank accounts based on opinions people have stated, or donations they have made without the need for a court order is undemocratic, disproportionate, and verging on authoritarian. There will be long-lasting effects from the decision to invoke the *Act* on the social fabric of Canada.

The federal government needs to take positive steps to ease the nation-wide concerns. Canadian families and our economy are facing increasing challenges because of supply chain issues, and associated inflation. Canada cannot afford to lose any more truck drivers who transport food and other vital supplies across the border. The removal of the vaccine mandate for truckers is critical, not only for Canada but for all of North America.

It is time for the federal government to re-visit its recent decision to keep ineffective international travel mandates, including 72-hour pre-departure testing, arrivals isolation, and quarantining for children under five years of age. Many other countries have begun lifting these requirements. Canada should not fall behind the rest of the world. Much of the western world is now working to begin with the already ubiquitous virus rather than trying to eradicate it. It is time for the federal government to do the same.

Sincerely,



Hon Jason Kenney PC MLA
Premier of Alberta